

## Civil Aviation News . . . . .

the time and labour of rectification and will consequently earn more bonus. Provision is made by rate-fixers for unforeseen and unusual contingencies so as to save the operator sustaining financial loss through no fault of his own. The hourly basic rate paid by B.E.A. is 2s 7d per hour and the basic times for various operations are calculated to allow men of average ability to earn 15 per cent more than previously.

It is interesting to note that when the strike first commenced the only people who turned up for duty in the C. of A. hangar were the representatives of the panel and the shop stewards with whom it had been agreed that the bonus scheme should operate. B.E.A. claim that during the time when the plans were being formulated many workers' representatives had urged the Corporation to expedite the introduction of the scheme since it was expected to prove popular with those concerned. Moreover, B.E.A. are convinced, if the scheme is given a proper trial, that it will, in fact, prove to be of benefit to both the Corporation and its employees.

### CAPTAIN ALCOCK ON SPRINGBOK ROUTE

AFTER having spent the last 12 months instructing at the B.O.A.C. base at Hythe, Captain E. S. J. Alcock



Capt. E. S. J. Alcock.

returned to operations on November 12th when he left Southampton in command of a Short Solent flying boat on the Springbok route to Johannesburg. Captain Alcock is well-known in South Africa as he was for a time based at Durban during the war where he commanded B.O.A.C. flying boats on the Horseshoe route from South Africa to India through Egypt. Thought to be the most senior pilot in the British Commonwealth, Captain Alcock has logged 21,000 hours' flying, during which he has covered a distance exceeding 3,500,000 miles.

### B.E.A. VIKING ACCIDENT REPORT

IN an accident to a B.E.A. Viking, the official report on which was published recently, which occurred on the northern slope of Irish Law Mountain, near Largs, Ayrshire, on April 21st, the crew of four and nine of the sixteen passengers were slightly injured. Following an uneventful flight from Northolt the pilot was making a ground controlled approach to Renfrew airfield and had passed over the airfield, carried out a procedure turn and lowered his undercarriage, when he became aware that the outer marker beacon had not been heard. Upon enquiring from Renfrew Control he was informed

that this beacon was functioning satisfactorily, and it was during a climbing turn calculated to bring the aircraft back into the beam that the aircraft struck the mountain at a shallow angle, just before re-entering the beam. The passengers and crew escaped though the aircraft caught fire and was subsequently burnt out. In consequence of the damage to the aircraft beam approach receiver it was impossible to locate any pre-crash defect but nevertheless, in view of the fact that the captain and the first officer were unable to hear the outer marker beacon signal (which was known to have been functioning) when flying steadily in the beam, it is considered that a failure probably occurred in the marker receiver installation. In the conclusions of the Chief Inspector's report it is observed that the Viking was airworthy at the time of the take-off; the time interval between passing over the inner marker beacon and the commencement of the procedure turn was too long and that the Captain had not appreciated the strength of the wind. In the opinion of the Chief Inspector the accident was due to an error of judgment by the Captain, the failure to receive the outer marker beacon signal having been a contributory factor.

### RADAR STORM DETECTION

IN our review (July 1st, 1948) of activities at the National Physical Laboratory, mention was made of the system whereby storm areas can now be located with a high degree of accuracy up to a range of 1,500 miles, by the use of special radar apparatus. Developed by the N.P.L. for the Meteorological Office, the apparatus has been given the name of "Sferics," and is made by the Plessey Co., Ltd., Ilford, Essex.

In addition to the control station at Dunstable, which is, of course, also the central forecasting station and communication centre of the Meteorological Office, there are three other observation stations, respectively at Camborne, Leuchars and Irvinestown, N.I. Each observation station is equipped with cathode-ray direction-finding equipment and an aerial system comprising four multi-turn loops, two of which have a N-S axis, and the other two an E-W axis. The receivers operate on a frequency of about 12.5 kc/sec, equivalent to a wavelength of 24,000 metres, this being the frequency at which maximum energy is radiated by lightning discharges. Furthermore, so low a frequency is free from interference by commercial W/T stations.

Observations are made simultaneously from the four stations twelve times daily, between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m., and the results plotted at Dunstable. The information is then broadcast over the teleprinter network and by W/T, and enables pilots of aircraft, particularly those flying over comparatively short routes to the Continent, to avoid storm areas. The information is also of great importance to the synoptic meteorologist in the analysis of daily weather charts.

### ICAO STAFF APPOINTMENTS

MORE than 3,000 replies have been received by ICAO in response to their advertisement of 60 staff vacancies. The replies have come from citizens of 42 nations. The largest number of applications comes from the United Kingdom, whose candidates numbered 957; 939 applications were received from the United States and 427 and 213 from France and Canada respectively. On the average each applicant is interested in about three positions. A list of vacancies, which includes administrative, technical, economic and legal posi-



**NORTHOLT STOPPAGE:** Some of the B.E.A. fleet grounded at Northolt by the strike of ground engineers referred to in the accompanying pages. All efforts by the Corporation and union officials to persuade the engineers to resume work have so far proved unavailing. The strike originated when 143 ground engineers refused to work under the incentive bonus scheme recently introduced in B.E.A. Cessation of flying is costing B.E.A., and therefore the British public, some £13,000 a day.